



Colorado



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## **Interagency Influenza Coordinating Committee Develops Guidelines for Pandemic Flu Emergency**

Colorado public health leaders have noted that local governments, businesses, public and private schools from preschools through universities, and human services agencies are unfamiliar with the requirements for preparing for a communicable disease emergency on the scale of a pandemic. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' checklists provided a first step for those sectors, but additional information was needed to actually move towards being able to implement an effective response during a public health emergency.

### **Finding a Solution**

Since October 2005, members of Colorado's Interagency Influenza Coordinating Committee and other external partners have formed several subcommittees to accomplish specific tasks and objectives. Among these subcommittees were the Business Subcommittee, the Education Subcommittee and the Social Distancing Support Subcommittee. The subcommittees were formed to bring public and private sector organizations together to develop easy-to-use guidelines and lists of credible resources to assist communities in their planning efforts to reduce the impact of pandemic influenza or other communicable diseases.

### **Results-Oriented, Product-Focused**

Three subcommittees of the Interagency Influenza Coordinating Committee developed these guidance documents for those who have responsibility for pandemic readiness planning in their businesses and communities. The documents provide general information about planning for and implementing emergency procedures during a pandemic. Each will be reviewed regularly and updated as necessary.

The guidelines were distributed statewide over several months, as each was completed. Dissemination began with distribution by the subcommittee members and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. Emergency managers, local government, public health staff, the education community, business owners and risk managers and human service agencies throughout the state were among the target groups, in addition to dissemination through the media.

The most current guidelines are posted on the state health department's Web site at [www.cdph.state.co.us/bt](http://www.cdph.state.co.us/bt).

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## **Productive Partnerships**

It has required more than a year of community outreach and networking to develop the relationships involved in creating the working subcommittees. Prior to the public health emergency preparedness grants, it would not have been possible to convene and staff a broad group of public and private leaders to create the guidance for social distancing, the business community guidance and the education guidance. Experts from each field were invited to join with public health staff to ensure that the guidelines would meet their needs.

## **Public Health in Emergency Response Role**

The relationships developed during this process have proven to be at least as important as the guidelines themselves. Over the past several years, the CDC grant for preparedness and response has allowed public health to take a leadership role in emergency preparedness and response, from weather-related natural disasters to pandemics to bioterrorism.

In many areas of the state, public health planners work daily with emergency management, to coordinate trainings and plans. A number of public health staff have become experts in the National Incident Management System, advising other emergency responders on protocols.

Public health now is a partner in nearly every emergency response exercise in the state, including exercises such as jet crashes and building explosions. In addition, public health has put pandemic readiness on the agenda of every risk manager and business continuity professional in the state.

## **Supporting Documents**

- Guidelines for Business Pandemic Readiness  
[www.cdphe.state.co.us/bt/public/businesspanready.pdf](http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/bt/public/businesspanready.pdf)
- Guidelines for Education: Planning for Pandemic Readiness  
[www.cdphe.state.co.us/bt/public/educationpanready.pdf](http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/bt/public/educationpanready.pdf)
- Social Distancing Support Guidelines for Pandemic Readiness  
[www.cdphe.state.co.us/bt/public/SDSSGL.pdf](http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/bt/public/SDSSGL.pdf)
- Various articles and websites



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## **Additional Information**

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